

# SKAT

## IN BRIEF

==  
REVISED EDITION  
==

BY  
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Skat is popularly credited with peasant ancestry and was at first simple in form but introduction into more cultivated circles gave it an impetus, gradually developing the game we know to-day. Tradition tells us that a coachman, having learned the earlier form from some peasants taught his master—an enthusiastic card player—who, in turn, interested his friends, residents of Altenburg, Germany. Afterwards, by means of a party of students on a pedestrian trip, it reached the University of Leipzig, and, education grafted upon sturdy stock producing a fine result, spread thence throughout the country, becoming the national game.

The first book on Skat was published in 1848 by Professor Hempel of Altenburg, the first congress was held in 1886 in that city, about twelve hundred players, including some Americans, being present; the first American congress was held in 1898 in St. Louis, bringing out three hundred enthusiasts but since then the annual attendance has passed four thousand and there are said to be over one hundred thousand Skat players in our country. In 1918 Skat will complete a century of existence, during which it has given pleasure to countless persons on both sides of the Atlantic.

The following is not a sworn statement but bears the hall-marks of truth: A professor, entering the lecture room of a German University, finds one student and gruffly proposes to dismiss the class. "Let us wait a bit," suggests the student, "perhaps another fellow will show up and we can have a little Skat!"

PROBABLY no one whose glance rests on this page has escaped being told by some pessimistic friend that Skat is very difficult. This little book has been prepared as a first aid to the injured, and the author promises that if the subject is approached in a spirit of cheerful interest the student will master an amusing, fascinating game with no more effort than will give zest to its acquisition.



## CHAPTER I

### AN OUTLINE OF THE GAME OF SKAT

**T**HERE are three active players although four or five may form a table, which helps to make Skat popular socially as almost any number of persons may participate in the game. The names of the active players are Vorhand, Mittelhand, and Hinterhand. Vorhand is always the person on the Dealer's left; he is under all circumstances the leader; Mittelhand is next beyond Vorhand; when three play, Hinterhand deals.



When four play Vorhand is (as before) on the Dealer's left, Mittelhand on Vorhand's left, and Hinterhand on Mittelhand's left, while the Dealer takes no cards although he shares in the score.



When five play Vorhand and Mittelhand remain unchanged. The Dealer gives no cards to the Third Player, dealing instead to the person on his own right, who is Hinterhand; Third Player and Dealer do not play but share in the score.



Skat is played with thirty-two cards none below the seven being used.

The pack must be thoroughly shuffled, the right hand adversary must cut, after which the Dealer gives three cards to each person beginning with Vorhand, then two face down for the skat, then four to each person, and finally three to each person, i. e., three-skat-four- three.

The lowest skat card (sequence and suit) determines the dealer. Ace is high.

#### THERE ARE THREE PRINCIPAL DIVISIONS OF THE GAME

1. With eleven trumps (four Jacks and a suit).
2. With four trumps (four Jacks only).
3. With no trumps.

#### ARBITRARY RANK OF SUITS

Diamonds the lowest  
Hearts the next  
Spades the next  
Clubs the highest



## COUNTING VALUE OF CARDS

Each Ace	=11	}	The object of the game being to get home 61 POINTS, the number of TRICKS won is unimportant. The adversaries win at 60 points but the "Player" must secure 61,—one more than half the total (120) of counting cards—to win his game. In case of a tie the Player loses.
" 10	=10		
" King	= 4		
" Queen	= 3		
" Jack	= 2		
7's, 8's, 9's have no counting value.			

Each deal is a game but it is customary to complete a round before stopping.

## UNIT VALUES OF GAMES

### THREE PRINCIPAL DIVISIONS

<i>With 11 Trumps</i>	<i>With 4 Trumps</i>	<i>With no Trumps</i>
Simple . . *D H S C	Grand	Null (Null) . . 20
or Frage . . 1 2 3 4	(Jacks the only trumps)	(must lose every trick; cards fall back into Whist sequence)
(not played)	Tourné Grand . . 12	Guckser Null won 20
Tourné . . D H S C	(turning a Jack)	lost 40
5 6 7 8	Guckser Grand won 12	Revolution (Null Ouvert Forcé) 60
(turning a trump from the skat)	lost 24	
Solo . . D H S C	(taking up both skat cards to lay away counting cards)	
9 10 11 12	Solo Grand . . 16	
(declaring the trump without using the skat cards.)	(declaring Grand without using skat)	
	Ramsch (to lose) 20	
	(only Vorhand may announce Ramsch)	
	Open Grand (Grand Ouvert) . . . 24	
	(Hand exposed must win every trick)	

\* Diamonds, Hearts, Spades, Clubs.

## MATADORES

Except in Nullo the four Jacks are always trumps, their relative value corresponding to the value of the suits, i. e., the Club Jack being the highest. The Club Jack and all cards *in sequence* with it are called Matadores and are the source of both pain and pleasure as will be shown later.

Since the Jacks are trumps irrespective of suit there are eleven trumps and seven cards in each plain suit.

### *Sequence in Trumps*

CJ, SJ, HJ, DJ, A, 10, K, Q, 9, 8, 7.

### *Sequence in Plain Suits*

A, 10, K, Q, 9, 8, 7.

## VALUE OF A GAME

Computing the value of a hand is the most bewildering part of Skat to beginners, but patience and perseverance conquer even this difficulty. The first puzzle to solve is that of the MULTIPLIERS, and here is where the Matadores cause widely varying emotions,—pleasure, because they are valuable trick-winners, pain, because they introduce the mystery of “with” and “without,” which at first sight seems impenetrable. The Club Jack, being a Matadore, is the source of all this trouble, and on picking up your cards you should look at once to see if it is among them; if so, you are “with,” if not, you are “without.” If you hold both Club and Spade Jacks you are “with” two; Club, Spade, and Heart, “with” three; Club, Spade, Heart, and Diamond, “with” four; Club, Spade, Heart, Diamond, and Ace of trumps “with” five; Club, Spade, Heart, Diamond, Ace and 10 of trumps “with” six, etc.

This is easily grasped after a little practice, but the fact that your multipliers are just the same if you are “without” as “with” creates a bitterness of spirit that prevails several minutes (according to temperament), during which despair marks you for its own. If you hold the Spade Jack you are “without” one (the all-important Club); if the Heart Jack is your highest

you are “without” two, etc. At this point you should deal many hands noticing if you are “with” or “without,” always remembering that the SEQUENCE TO THE CLUB MATADORE MUST BE UNBROKEN, for the instant it is broken all Jacks BELOW THE BREAK fail to become matadores and, consequently, multipliers.

Examples of multipliers;

CJ, SJ,—“with” two.

HJ, DJ,—“without” two.

CJ, HJ, DJ,—“with” one (sequence broken).

CJ,—“with” one (sequence broken).

CJ, DJ,—“with” one (sequence broken).

SJ, HJ, DJ,—“without” one (CJ missing).

SJ,—“without” one (CJ missing).

SJ, DJ,—“without” one (CJ missing).

HJ,—“without” two (CJ, SJ missing).

DJ,—“without” three (CJ, SJ, HJ missing).

No Jacks but Ace of trumps—“without” four, etc.

A little practice proving that the alarming foe—“with” and “without”—is only a windmill when attacked with determination, your mind is now at peace and free to return to the question of multipliers.

#### MULTIPLIERS

The “game”(whether won or lost) gives a multiplier of ..... 1

“With” one Matadore gives an additional multiplier of ..... 1

“With” two Matadores “ “ “ “ ..... 2

“With” three “ “ “ “ ..... 3

“With” four “ “ “ “ ..... 4

etc.

“Without” one Matadore “ “ “ “ ..... 1

“Without” Two Matadores “ “ “ “ ..... 2

“Without” three “ “ “ “ ..... 3

etc.

Example:—Holding CJ, SJ, your multipliers are “with” two, plus one for game, *i.e.*, three TIMES the unit value of the trump suit; if this were a Spade Tourné your formula would be  $2 + 1 = 3 \times 7 = 21$ .

The value of each hand is found, therefore, by multiplying the UNIT VALUE OF YOUR GAME by the sum of your multipliers (game and “with” or “without”).

Practice this until you can compute the value of a hand readily.

The “Player’s” score is the only one kept; each game is computed on his cards, and he is credited with “plus” the total amount of his game if he wins, “minus” if he loses.

#### SUGGESTIONS

When learning Skat practice counting part of the pack until you can add the valuable cards quickly. It is essential to keep mental count during play; many a game that might otherwise be won is lost through neglecting to form this habit, and consequently not knowing whether or not to win the present trick or to wait for a richer one. Sort your cards in suits keeping the Jacks by themselves in the middle of the hand.

Don’t try to learn too much at once.

Practice “with” and “without” until you are sure of your multipliers.

Frage, Tourné, and Gucki are pronounced *Frahgah*, *Turnay*, and *Gookie*.

Only the last trick may be examined and that only before the next lead is made; disregarding this rule costs the culprit the game.

## CHAPTER II

### *First Principal Division*

#### *With Eleven Trumps*

#### The Simple Game, Tourné, Solo

##### I

#### The Simple Game or Frage

##### UNIT VALUES

D H S C

1 2 3 4

This is played with eleven trumps,—the four Jacks and a suit.

After the cards have been dealt as described in the first chapter, Vorhand takes up the skat without showing it to the adversaries, declares the trump, and lays away, face down, two cards that he may count in his tricks at the end of the game, but may not use in play. He is now the "Player," having named the trump, and the other active players are partners against him. These partners proceed with delight to "fatten" each other's tricks with their counting cards in order to defeat the Player by getting home 60 points or more.

You must follow suit if able to do so, but failing the suit, may trump or discard as you please.

This form of the game should be practiced for two or three rounds to win familiarity with leading, fattening and counting. When these features are no longer strange you must prepare to bear with fortitude the knowledge that the Simple Game is not played—like the Spade-make in Bridge, the scores are too small to sustain interest among card players—but this is the only bit of Skat wisdom to be laid aside; all the remainder will be needed whenever you play.

## II

### Tourné

#### Turning a Trump From the Skat

##### UNIT VALUES

D H S C

5 6 7 8

We now take up that portion of Skat that introduces half the fun of the game—the bidding. Vorhand no longer is left in undisputed possession of the skat and of the declaration,—they now belong to the highest bidder.

Mittelhand has the first right to buy the privilege from Vorhand; Hinterhand may not speak until they have finished.

In Tourné the unit value of Diamonds—the lowest suit—is 5, and the first bid is always on that basis no matter what suit eventually becomes trump. As one is, of necessity, either “with” or “without” the Club Jack, and as game always gives a multiplier of one, making a multiplier of two on any hand, the first bid is always  $1+1=2 \times 5=10$ ; consequently Mittelhand says, “Ten.” This means, “Can you hold the game at ten”? If Vorhand can hold it he says, “Yes,” or “I hold;” Mittelhand then passes or bids higher.

But the figure you name in bidding need not be the actual worth of your own game. Example:—You bid up to 30 before the others pass, but your game is a Club Tourné “with” 3, worth 32 and you score that number. You **MUST** win as much as you bid but you **MAY** win more.

If Vorhand cannot hold the game even at ten he says, “No,” or “I pass,” and his privileges pass to Mittelhand, who, therefore, owns the skat and the right to declare the game (but not to lead) unless Hinterhand can buy them from him. Hinterhand now says, “I pass,” or bids *higher* than the last figure named by Mittelhand.

## Examples of bidding:

1. M:—"I pass." Then Hinterhand may speak.  
H.to V:—"Ten."  
V:—"I hold ten."  
H:—"I pass."

Vorhand is the Player.

2. M:—"I pass."  
H:—"I pass."

Vorhand is the player.

3. M:—"Ten."  
V:—"I hold ten."  
M:—"Twelve."  
V:—"I hold twelve."  
M:—"Fourteen."  
V:—"No." "I pass" or "You may have it."  
H:—"Fifteen."  
M:—"I hold fifteen."  
H:—"Sixteen."  
M:—"I hold."  
H:—"I pass."

Mittelhand is the Player.

4. M:—"Ten."  
V:—"I hold."  
M:—"I pass."  
H to V:—"Twelve."  
V:—"I hold."  
H:—"Fourteen."  
V:—"I pass."

Hinterhand is the Player.

Each bid must represent the value of some game. For example:—You may not bid 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 26, etc., as no game is worth these amounts. A little practice with a score card will show which numbers may be used, i. e., 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, etc., each representing some game.

The successful bidder becomes the Player and at once picks up *one* of the skat cards— but without seeing the face of either card until he chooses which one to lift—holding it clear of his hand to avoid mixing while he decides if he wishes that suit for trump. If it fits his hand he turns it face up on the table and that suit is trump. He then takes both skat cards into his hand without showing the second, lays away two, and the game proceeds as in Frage with this exception:—no matter who makes the highest bid, Vorhand is always the leader. The adversaries may take away the skat from Vorhand, they may take away his right to declare the game, but they can never take away his right to lead.

If the first skat card examined should prove a disastrous trump the Player may put it in his hand without showing it and turn the second, which becomes trump regardless of its fitness or unfitness; he may not go back to the first one even if the second is worse. When the second card is turned, the Player should say, “Passt-nicht,” which, freely translated, means, “It does not fit,” and if he loses his game his loss is double.

Example:—“With”  $1+1$  (for game)  $= 2 \times 6$  (Heart Tourné)  $= 12$ ; if he wins he is  $+12$ ; if he loses he is  $-24$  if he turned the second card.

Before one’s judgment has developed, it is puzzling to know what kind of strength a hand contains, but Mr. Foster has formulated standards that are of great assistance to the student, the first of which should be learned at this point:—

\* SAFE COUNT FOR TOURNÉ

2 Jacks	}	Count 4	}	Four cards among Aces and Jacks with three suits guarded make a safe Tourné.
2 Aces				
3 Jacks	}	Count 4		
1 Ace				
1 Jack	}	Count 4		
3 Aces				

\* Foster Rule.



Examples:

1	Clubs—J, K, 9 Spades—A, 10, Q Hearts—A Diamonds—J, K, 9	} 2 Jacks and 2 Aces	2	Clubs—A, 7 Spades—J, K, Q Hearts—J, Q, 9 Diamond—J, 10	} 3 Jacks and 1 Ace
	3 Clubs—J, K, 9 Spades—A, Q, 7 Hearts—A, 10 Diamonds—A, 8			} 1 Jack and 3 Aces	

One often risks a Tourné with less strength but these are examples that are fairly sure to win.

If the Player has made an unlucky turn and fears being made schneider he may throw down his hand before the second lead has been made, limiting his losses to the value of his game.

#### EXTRA MULTIPLIERS

Schneider (91 points) and game..... 2

Schwarz (every trick) and game..... 3

Example:—"Without" two, game and schneider in a Club Tourné worth  $2+2=4 \times 8=32$ . "With" three, game and schwarz in a Spade Tourné worth  $3+3=6 \times 7=42$ .

#### LAYING AWAY

Counting cards that are in danger of being caught by the adversaries should be laid away in the skat. It is good policy to blank a suit but seldom right to lay away the Ace of a plain suit as it costs a re-entry. With ten once guarded in one suit and a singleton in another, lay away the ten and the singleton as this leaves the smallest number of points for the adversaries to save.

#### OVERBIDDING

Skat holds the Player to his promises with relentless exactness; he MUST make good his bid or receive a minus large enough to cover it. For this reason, bidding in Tourné should be computed on the Diamond unit value, as that is the lowest,

but sometimes one risks overbidding to secure the privilege of being the Player. Suppose Vorhand holds these cards:—

Clubs—J, K.

Spades—J, Q, 9.

Hearts—A, Q.

Diamonds—A, 10, 8, worth fifteen on a Diamond basis ( $2+1=3 \times 5=15$ ) and Mittelhand bids ten, twelve, fourteen, fifteen (with such good cards Vorhand will not yield, but risks overbidding) sixteen, eighteen, and then passes; Hinterhand passes. Vorhand is the Player, he turns, and getting a Diamond, plays Passt-nicht, but the second card is also a Diamond and no matter if he gets home 61 points he has lost his game unless he can get an extra multiplier through making the adversaries schneider, because he bid 18 and the Diamond game is worth but 15. "With"  $2+2$  (for game and schneider)  $=4 \times 5=20$  would cover his bid but if he cannot get home 91 points he loses (not 18 for there is no Diamond game worth 18 but) 20, the lowest Diamond game that will *cover* his bid.

#### THE PLAYER'S LEADS

Almost invariably lead trumps; if strong, to exhaust the adversaries; if weak, to conceal the weakness. If too weak to lead trumps lead Aces from Ace-ten suits.

Usually lead Jacks, particularly when the adversaries hold Ace or ten of trumps, but if you have both high counting cards and do not hold the Chief Matadore it is often good play to lead a small trump as your higher trumps may catch more valuable cards later in the deal.

#### ADVERSARIES' LEADS

\*Ace, 10

10, K, and others, otherwise usually lead low.

Try to get the Player in the middle (that is, make him second player on as many tricks as possible), this with the laudable desire of destroying his peace of mind and of keeping him

\* —shows the first lead.

wondering whether to play high or low, to trump or not to trump. In order to do this the adversary on his right should lead LONG suits THROUGH him, while the one on his left leads SHORT suits UP TO him. This attack defeats the Player many times when his cards are strong enough to win him the game if he were not being squeezed between two determined foes.

### III

#### Solo

#### UNIT VALUES

D H S C

9 10 11 12

Solo, as the name implies, is played alone, without the skat, although the skat cards belong to the Player, are added to his tricks and may affect his multipliers at the end of the game.

When much of your strength lies in one suit you have not a safe Tourné but you may be strong enough to declare a suit without risking a turn.

#### \*SAFE COUNT FOR SOLO

Bid Solo when you can count 8 among your trumps and *winning* Aces and tens in plain suits.

Example:—

1. C.—J, 10, Q, 9, 8.

S.—J.

H.—A, 10.

D.—9, 8.

Club Solo, unit value 12; “with”  $2+1=3 \times 12=36$ .

2. C.—J, A, 10, Q.

S.—J, A, Q, 9.

H.—A, 9.

D.—

Spade Solo, unit value 11; “with”  $2+1=3 \times 11=33$ .

\* Foster Rule.

3. C.—

S.—J, 7.

H.—J, K, Q, 9.

D.—J, A, 10, 8.

Heart Solo, unit value 10; "without"  $1+1=2 \times 10=20$ .

4. C.—A.

S.—

H.—A, 10, K.

D.—J, A, 10, 9, 8, 7,

Diamond Solo, unit value 9; "without"  $3+1=4 \times 9=36$ .

In bidding "without" it should be remembered that a Jack may be in the skat and change the multipliers. In the case of the Diamond Solo given above the game is worth 36 but if the Spade Jack is found in the skat it is worth only "without"  $1+1=2 \times 9=18$ .

It is dangerous to bid the full value on hands when you are "without" as the penalty for overbidding is heavy. For example, if the Player bids 36 on the above cards but finds the Spade Jack in the skat he loses his game regardless of the fact that he gets home 61 points, because with the Spade Jack he has a game worth only 18 after promising to win one worth 36; he is, therefore, minus 36.

The lost game is always reckoned on the unit value of the trump suit multiplied by *enough multipliers to cover the amount of the bid*.

Solo introduces another interesting feature, the ANNOUNCEMENTS, which give extra multipliers. If the Player sees from his cards that he can get home 91 points he names the trump, adding, "schneider announced"; if he sees that he can win every trick he says, "schwarz announced"; either announcement giving him extra multipliers as shown in the following table:

#### EXTRA MULTIPLIERS IN SOLO

Game and schneider announced.....	3
Game and schwarz after announcing schneider.....	4
Game and schwarz announced.....	5

## THE PLAYER'S LEADS

In Solo always lead trumps even if not strong.

Jack Leads.

\*CJ, SJ, HJ, DJ.

CJ, SJ, HJ.

CJ, SJ.

SJ, HJ.

SJ, DJ.

CJ, HJ, DJ.

With three or four, occasionally vary the lead to puzzle the adversaries.

High counting trumps and one Jack lead a low trump first as usually it will be a cheap trick to lose.

## ADVERSARIES' LEADS

A, 10

10, K

Take full advantage of the fact that the Player has not laid away and play out your Aces freely, change suits often to keep him from discarding unless your partner is blank in a suit, when you should usually continue it so he may discard, fatten, or trump at his pleasure.

Get the Player in the middle and make his life a burden to him by leading LONG suits THROUGH him.

## TOTAL NUMBER OF MULTIPLIERS

Game (whether won or lost).....	1
Game and Schneider (91 points).....	2
Game and Schneider announced (solo only).....	3
Game and Schwarz (every trick).....	3
Game and Schwarz after announcing Schneider (Solo only).....	4
Game and Schwarz announced (Solo only).....	5
"With" or "without" Matadores for each one.....	1

\* — shows first play, — shows second play.

## SUGGESTIONS

Before the bidding is begun, compute the value of your game so you may bid briskly, as spirited bidding adds to the pleasure.

A weak Solo will win more often than a dangerous Tourné.

V and H may risk Solos falling short of the "8 count" when there is no strong adverse bidding but M should be more conservative as he is in the worst position,—in the middle.

Remember how many trumps are out and the highest unplayed.

Win with Ace from Ace-ten suits as the game is sometimes saved by a point.

On each deal the Player has two actives enemies thirsting to defeat him but this is balanced by the great advantage he has (whenever he is strong) in making the declaration and also by the freedom he feels in having no partner's fortune to risk with his own.

When—as Player—the master trump is marked against you, try to force it out with your long suit, particularly if it is on your right, as your left hand adversary may hesitate to fatten on high suit cards when he would fatten joyfully if you led a losing trump.

Vorhand is the best position for Tourné and Solo, Hinterhand is the next best, especially with a short suit that may be trumped to advantage.

The adversaries in Solo should play their highest cards on their partner's tricks and their lowest on the Player's, as this helps the partner to place the unplayed cards. This applies to 7, 8, 9 as well as to higher cards.

The adversaries should not false card when playing Jacks, i. e., should not play HJ when holding DJ, etc., as it makes it harder for the partner to place the cards.

Begin all bidding at ten, and try to hide the actual value of your game, for if the adversaries suspect it they can often guess at several of your cards. You score the full amount of your game no matter if you buy it cheaply.

Do not lead from a tenace suit unless the alternative is worse.

Holding a fourchette, cover the card led unless you do not wish to risk getting the lead on account of position.

Second hand, generally cover a Jack led by opponent but seldom put CJ on DJ as your partner may win the trick more cheaply.

After the adverse trumps are drawn it is often good play to free your hand of a losing card before one adversary can discard that suit and get ready to fatten; early losses are usually less heavy than later ones.



## CHAPTER III

### *Second Principal Division*

#### *With Four Trumps*

#### *Grand*

##### UNIT VALUES

Tourné Grand.....	12
Guckser (Gucki Grand) won 12; lost 24	
Solo Grand.....	16
Ramsch (to lose).....	20
Open Grand (Grand Ouvert).....	24

Grand is played with Jacks only for trumps, making four plain suits, each of seven cards, and four trumps,—the Jacks. The game is computed with multipliers as before.

#### I

Tourné Grand.....	12
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If you chance to turn a Jack when expecting to play a suit Tourné you have the right to declare Grand or the suit of the Jack, whichever fits your cards the better. If you have turned the second skat card it is a Passt-nicht just as in a suit Tourné and the loss is double if you fail to get home 61 points. Take up both skat cards and lay away as in Tourné. Schneider and schwarz may be WON but may not be ANNOUNCED because the skat is used.



## II

\*Guckser 12 (won); 24 (lost)

When you would like to play Grand, but find your unguarded counting cards too valuable to relinquish to the adversary, play Guckser; this is declared by taking *both* skat cards into the hand at the same time,—allowable only in Guckser. Schneider and schwarz may be WON but may not be ANNOUNCED because the skat is used.

This form of Grand is very popular, particularly when holding unguarded tens, as it gives one great pleasure to realize that, safe in the skat, far beyond the reach of the grasping opponents, may be laid one or two valuable cards to be added to your tricks at the end of the game. You should not expect to get counting cards from the skat, but should regard it simply as a safe in which to place treasures, in other words—†“Never guck to FIND but always to LAY AWAY.”

Guckser, like Passt-nicht, loses double.

Example:—“With”  $2+1=3 \times 12=36$ , plus 36 if won but minus 72 if lost.

### SAFE COUNT FOR GUCKSER OR TOURNÉ GRAND

Declare Guckser or Tourné Grand if you can count 5 between your Jacks and Aces, and hold at least one suit nearly established.

## III

Solo Grand.....16

Solo Grand is announced without the skat, which, however, belongs to the Player, at the end of the game is added to his tricks, and may affect his multipliers. Schneider and Schwarz may be announced.

Two Jacks and two established suits constitute a Grand for Vorhand if his losing cards have few points among them and if the hand is not a better Solo.

\* Guckser, an American product, was first officially recognized at the St Louis congress in 1898.

† Foster Rule.

Mittelhand and Hinterhand must be one degree stronger to counterbalance the disadvantage of not having the lead, i. e., must have another Jack or another suit guarded.

#### \*SAFE COUNT FOR GRAND

Declare Grand if your WINNING Jacks and sure tricks in plain suits count 7.

There must be no [points among four losing cards but with fewer losing cards there may be ten points without danger. Schneider and schwarz may be announced as the skat is not used.

#### THE PLAYER'S LEADS

CJ, SJ, HJ, DJ, lead SJ to coax a fattening card from the adversary on your left, who may think his partner holds CJ. Sometimes, holding the four Matadores and a losing suit card, it is good play to lead the suit first.

CJ, SJ.

CJ and red.

SJ, HJ.

SJ, DJ.

Holding three Jacks, lead one; two Jacks both red, lead one if strong in all suits; one Jack and all suits guarded, lead the Jack; holding no Jack and all suits guarded, lead Aces, from Ace-ten suits, then tens.

A, 10.

10, K to force Ace.

10, K and others.

#### ADVERSARIES' LEADS

The leads are practically the same as in Solo except that in Guckser the Player is suspected of being blank in a suit, so Aces are not led so freely as in Solo Grand, and short suits are led up to him and long suits through him as in Tourné.

\* Foster Rule.

In Solo Grand, always lead LONG suits both up to and through.

Get the Player in the middle.

Keep tens and Kings guarded.

Seldom clear the Player's suit on the first round.

Try to discard singletons.

#### IV

\*Ramsch (to lose).....—20—30—50

Ramsch is a delightful feature of Skat; it is a Grand in that the Jacks are the only trumps, but there the resemblance ceases and it proceeds to introduce fun on its own account. Each player is for himself; his whole desire is to LOSE as many Points as possible, and to lose more than his foes succeed in losing, because the WINNER of the GREATEST NUMBER OF POINTS LOSES THE GAME. One's own unavoidable tricks are greeted with lamentation, the adversaries' with glee, Aces and tens are thrust upon unwilling recipients, and altogether Folly is lord for a few brief but joyful moments. There are no multipliers, the value of the game being minus 20, unless one person has succeeded in taking no trick, when the value becomes minus 30, or if two persons have escaped without a trick the value is minus 50, the score in each case being deducted from the score of the unlucky winner of the greatest number of points.

Vorhand is the only one who may announce Ramsch and he only when there has been no bidding. Ramsch is Vorhand's escape from calamity when the game has been left on his hands and he dares not risk Tourné, Solo, or Grand. The Skat belongs to the winner of the last trick.

Ramsch is the only game in Skat where the score is given to the winner when he is *not* the Player; in all other forms the PLAYER'S score is the only one kept, it is also the only game where there is no partnership.

\* Ramsch was first played in the sixties.

## LEADS

Lead a red Jack; the top of two-card suits; the middle of three-card suits. If you must win a trick in a suit win it early, as it is increasingly difficult to get rid of the lead the farther you get in the deal. Keep a low card to throw the lead late in the deal. A singleton is a good opening but a singleton seven is too valuable to give up early. Discard a whole suit if possible, choosing a short one first. It is unnecessary to keep a mental count of the points as the fall of the cards is so important that it should claim your closest attention.

## V

### Open Grand.....24

Open Grand is a "grand slam"; the Player must win every *trick*, not merely every *point*. He spreads his cards face up on the table defying the adversaries to win a trick. They may not confer with each other but may study his hand until satisfied that he is right.

The skat cards may affect his multipliers but otherwise are of no value as it is tricks, not points, that he must secure. Schwarz is announced.

#### Examples of Grands:—

#### 1. Tourné Grand

C.—J, K. Q.  
S.—A, 9, 7.  
H.—A, 10, 7.  
D.—A.

#### 2. Guckser

C.—A, Q.  
S.—J, K.  
H.—J, A, 10.  
D.—J, 10, 7.

The Player turns DJ and decides to play Grand as the least perilous of two uncertain games.

"With"  $1+1=2 \times 12=24$ .

The Player picks up *both* skat cards in order to lay away D10 and SK.

"Without"  $1+1=2 \times 12=24$   
if won; 48 if lost.

### 3. Solo Grand

C.—J, A, 10, Q, 8.

S.———

H.—J, A, 10.

D.—10, K.

This might be played Club Solo (24) or Solo Grand (32); being equally safe, Grand, the more valuable, should be declared.

“With”  $1+1=2 \times 16=32$ .

### 5. Ramsch

C.—K, Q, 9, 7.

S.—10, 8.

H.—10, 9, 8.

D.—J.

A red Jack is the best opening in Ramsch; the object is to lose as many *points* as possible. There are no multipliers; Vorhand only may announce Ramsch. Value 20.

### 4. Solo Grand

C.—A, 10.

S.—A, 10.

H.—A, 10.

D.—A, 9, 8, 7.

Solo Grand; lead Aces, then tens.

“Without”  $4+1=5 \times 16=80$ .

### 6. Open Grand

C.—J.

S.—J, A, 10, 9, 8, 7.

H.—J.

D.—A, 10.

As Vorhand impossible to lose a trick.

“With”  $3+5=8 \times 24=192$ .

## SUGGESTIONS

Vorhand is the best position for Grand.

Jacks alone do not make a Grand; suit strength is also necessary.

The general rules for laying away hold good in Tourné and Guckser,—blank a suit or save counting cards in danger.

Usually do not keep a losing card till the last trick, as one adversary will have saved the Ace of that suit and the other will fatten with Ace or ten of another, while if led early, both generally follow suit and the loss is lighter, especially if it is a small card from Ace and small. So after settling the trump question lead your losing card at once, if you hold re-entry.

Fattening is very important in Grand but be careful not to fatten with cards that may be needed to win tricks.

Play your highest card on your partner's trick but your lowest on the Player's; this applies to cards like 7, 8, 9 as well as to better ones.

It is sometimes more valuable to discard than to fatten.

The adversaries should try to force the Player to trump, as, often in Grand he cannot afford to do so.

Open Grand "with" four plus five for schwarz announced, worth 216, is the highest score in Skat.

The Player must get home 61 to win game, 91 to make the adversaries schneider, but the adversaries win at 60 and make the Player schneider at 90.

When the Player leads the Chief Matadore, if the second player has no Jack, he *may* show his strongest suit to his partner by discarding a small card from it, although it is customary to discard first from short suits.

Skat players sometimes find great amusement in "forced Ramsch," that is in agreeing that certain rounds *must* be played Ramsch, say the third, fourth, fifth or last round of deals.



## CHAPTER IV

### *Third Principal Division*

#### *With no Trumps*

#### *Nulló*

##### UNIT VALUES

Guckser Nulló.....	20 (40)
Nulló (Null) .....	20
Open Nulló.....	40
Revolution.....	60

Nulló has been adopted into the Skat family but is not a blood relation. The bidding is the same; the Player still struggles against two adversaries, but in Nulló their utmost endeavor is to force a trick upon him, for the instant he wins a trick even containing no points he is beaten, the cards are thrown down, and joy reigns in their hearts. The object, therefore, on the Player's part is to lose everything and if he succeeds in doing so he is plus 20.

The skat is not used. There are no trumps, no Matadores, no multipliers, no ranking value of suits, no skat rank of cards, which fall back into Whist sequence,—A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, there are no counting cards. Everything is so different that you feel like Alice in "Through the Looking Glass," where, in order to reach a place she walked away from it, for in Nulló in order to win you must lose everything. It has a strange charm and is the most exciting form of the game.

# I

Guckser Nullo.....20 (won) 40 (lost)

If you wish to play Guckser Nullo you must say "Nullo" before you pick up both skat cards or you may be compelled to play Guckser Grand. You take up the skat in order to get rid of one dangerous card but, of course, are quite likely to find something equally dangerous. The Player must lose every trick.

# II

Nullo.....20

Nullo is declared without the skat; the Player must lose every trick.

# III

Open Nullo (Null Ouvert).....40

In Open Nullo the Player must hold low sequences and be able to underplay any lead with his hand exposed, losing every trick.

# IV

Revolution (Null Ouvert Forcé)....60

The Player must hold such low cards that the adversaries may consult, and yet he cannot be forced to take a trick. Revolution is sometimes not permitted as it shuts out several good games.

Examples:—

## 1. Nullo

C.———

S.—A, Q, 9, 8, 7.

H.—10, 9, 7.

D.—J, 7.

## 3. Revolution

C.—9, 8, 7.

S.—9, 8.

H.—8, 7.

D.—9, 8, 7.

## 2. Guckser Nullo

C.—9, 8.

S.—A.

H.—Q, 10, 9, 7.

D.—10, 9, 7.

## 4. Open Nullo

C.—Q, 9, 8, 7.

S.———

H.—K, J, 9, 7.

D.—8, 7.



### THE PLAYER'S LEADS

Open with a low singleton but not a singleton seven unless you are safe in all suits, as the player's lead is almost never returned.

Avoid six-card suits as the skat may contain the others.

9, 7.

K, 7, hoping to discard the King.

### ADVERSARIES' LEADS

A, 7.

K, 7, this lead shows no more.

A, Q, 7.

Return your partner's lead but not the Player's.

### SUGGESTIONS

For once Vorhand is not the best position but the worst; Hinterhand is the best.

There are eight cards in each suit.

Long suits are not safe unless they end in 7.

Never let the Player discard.

The adversaries should give each other discards.

Discard to blank a suit but not one ending in 8, 7, or 9, 7, as those are safe.

## CHAPTER V

### A SCORE CARD EXPLAINED

A	B	C	D
+48	+64	+44	+40
+84	+44	+54	+60

Explanation of scores:—

A wins a Club Solo “with”  $3+1=4 \times 12=48$ .

B wins a Solo Grand “with”  $2+2$  (game and schneider  $=4 \times 16=64$ ).

C wins a Spade Solo “without”  $3+1=4 \times 11=44$ .

D wins a Club Tourné “with”  $3+2=5 \times 8=40$ .

A then wins a Guckser Grand “with”  $2+1=3 \times 12=36$ , which added to his former score makes him +84. Each score must be the TOTAL score.

B loses at Ramsch, losing 20, which is deducted from his score leaving him 44.

C wins a Diamond Tourné “with”  $1+1=2 \times 5=10$ , which added to his former score makes him +54.

D wins a Nullo, worth +20, which added to his former score makes him +60.

### PROVING THE SCORE

It is unnecessary to prove the score in purely social games where there are no stakes, but the manner of doing so is so simple and interesting that it is a pleasure to understand it.

Take the score given above as an illustration, repeating each player's last total:—

A+84      B+44      C+54      D+60

B, having the LOWEST SCORE, is called ZERO and each

score is PULLED DOWN exactly as many points as he is pulled down to make him zero, i. e., 44, which leaves

	A+40	B 0	C+10	D+16
Multiply by	4	4	4	4No of players
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	+160	0	+40	+64

Each score is then multiplied by the number of players because you win from and lose to each player; and from each result is subtracted the total plus score won by all four, which, of course, belongs to ALL but not to any ONE.

A	B	C	D
+160	0	+40	+64
+ 66	+66	+66	+66—Total plus
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
A+94	B—66	C—26	D—2 Add
—94 Proves			—26 Minus
			—66 Scores
			<hr/>
			—94

The sum of the plus scores and the sum of the minus scores must balance.

Example of proof with a minus score:—

A	B	C	D
+20	+33	+10	—16
+36	+49	+26	0 Zero
4	4	4	4 No. of players
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
+144	+196	+104	0
+111	+111	+111	+111
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
+ 33	+ 85	—7	—111
	+ 33		—7
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	+118		—118
	—118 Proves		

When the lowest score is a minus it must be RAISED to reach zero, so each player's score must be RAISED exactly as much, in this case 16; otherwise the proof is the same as in the first example given. Be sure to remember that you must do to EACH score exactly what you did to the LOWEST score TO MAKE IT ZERO.

## SUMMARY

### *Skat*

#### THREE PRINCIPAL GAMES

1					2		3	
<i>With 11 Trumps</i>					<i>With 4 Trumps</i>		<i>With no Trumps</i>	
Trumps .	D	H	S	C	(Jacks only trumps)		Nullo	
Simple .	1	2	3	4	Grand		Guckser Nullo 20 (40)	
Tourné .	5	6	7	8	Tourné Grand . 12		Nullo . . . . 20	
Solo . .	9	10	11	12	Guckser Grand 12 (24)		Open Nullo . . 40	
					Solo Grand . . . 16		Revolution . . 60	
					Ramsch (to lose) 20			
					Open Grand . . 24			

#### MULTIPLIERS

Game.....	1
Game and schneider.....	2
Game and schneider announced (Solo only).....	3
Game and schwarz.....	3
Game and schwarz after announcing schneider (Solo only).....	4
Game and schwarz announced (Solo only).....	5
Matadores "with" or "without" for each one.....	1

Passt-nicht, (in suit Tourné or Tourné Grand), Guckser Grand, and Guckser Nullo lose double when lost.

#### DEFINITIONS

Chief Matadore—the Club Jack.

Contingencies—Matadores, schneider, and schwarz are sometimes called contingencies.

Cross-ruff—when each partner can trump a different suit.

Deal—the thirty-two cards.

Discard—the play of a different plain suit from the one led.

Established suit—one headed by A, 10.

False card—Card played with intent to deceive, usually the highest of cards of equal value.

“Fatten”—to play counting cards on your partner’s tricks in order to get them home.

Fourchette—the cards immediately above and below the one led.

Force—to force is to lead a card that must be trumped in order to be won.

Hand—the ten cards dealt each player.

Hinterhand (short i as in winter)—the last player on the first trick.

In Sequence—two or more cards touching in value, like A, 10,; 10 K; K, Q; etc.

Leading through the Player—when he is on your left.

Leading up to the Player—when he is on your right.

Matadores—All Jacks and trumps in UNBROKEN SEQUENCE WITH THE CLUB JACK.

Mittelhand—the person on Vorhand’s left.

Ouvert—applied to games played open or exposed on the table.

Plain suit—any suit not declared trump.

“Player”—the successful bidder, who names the game to be played.

Partners—the two active players who combine against the “Player” on each deal.

Re-entry—a card that will give you the lead after you have lost it.

Revoke—not following suit when you can do so.

Ruff—to trump.

Singleton—the only card of a suit held originally.

Tenace—the first and third best of a suit.

The skat (pronounced skaht)—two cards placed face down on the table.

Vorhand (pronounced Forehand)—the person on the Dealer’s left.

Wenzel—Jack.

## PENALTIES

### From The North American Skat League

1. A Dealer misdealing shall be charged with ten points but must deal again. If in the course of a game it develops that cards had been misdealt, i. e., that one or more players had either too many or not enough cards, then the Player loses the game if he did not have the right number of cards, even if the same thing occurred with one of the opponents. But if the Player had the right number of cards and one or both of the opponents had too many or not enough, then the Player wins, even if he would have lost the game otherwise. The Dealer is not fined in this case. Each player should make sure before beginning the game, that he has ten cards, neither more nor less, in his hand.

2. In games in which the aid of the skat is required, the Player will be charged the full value of the game if he neglects to discard the proper number of cards.

3. If the Dealer examines either or both skat cards before or during the progress of the game he shall be charged ten points.

4. In case a participant examines either of the skat cards (without right) before the termination of the game, such person shall be charged the full value of the game announced, but the opposing person or persons shall have the privilege of continuing the game for the purpose of increasing the value thereof by making Schneider.

5. If, before a game shall be announced, it is discovered that the skat cards are missing, or they, or any of them, are in the possession or have been seen by any participant, the Dealer shall draw out of the hand of the person having the skat cards, or any of them, sufficient cards to leave said player ten cards, after which the bidding shall proceed as if no mistake had been made, but the player causing this proceeding shall be fined 25 points and is forbidden to participate in the bidding and denied the opportunity to play any game during this particular deal.

6. A player mis-leading or neglecting to follow suit loses the game, but any one of the participants has the privilege to have such error corrected and proceed with the game to its end for the purpose of increasing the player's loss. If then one of the opponents makes one of these errors the Player wins his game but its value is also charged against the opponent making the error.

7. If either of the opponents leads wrongly (plays out of order) or neglects to follow suit, such errors shall terminate the game; in such case the game is won by the Player, and its value charged against the opponent who made the error but the Player has the privilege to have such error corrected and proceed with the game to the end, for the purpose of increasing the value of the game.

9. If, during the play of a game, the Player places his remaining cards on the table and declares his game won, but is found to have erred, he shall lose his game, even if he might have obtained all the remaining tricks.

10. If, during the progress of a game, any one of the opponents places his cards upon the table, declaring thereby to have defeated the Player's game, all the remaining cards belong to the Player, and the opponent who erred shall be charged with the whole value of the game.

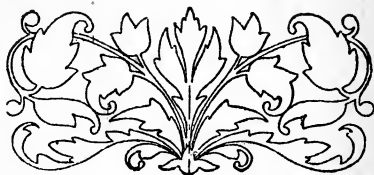
11. If a Player declares his game lost and places all or his remaining cards upon the table, such remaining or all cards belong to the opponents, and the player loses the full value of the game.

12. A player who examines the tricks taken (except the last made trick) or counts the points thereof, loses the game announced, but any one of the participants has the privilege to insist on the game proceeding to its end for the purpose of increasing the player's loss.

13. If either of the opponents commits the act last mentioned the Player can insist on proceeding with the game for the purpose of increasing its value. The full value of the game in such case shall be charged against the person committing this act.

14. If the Player or one of the opponents claims all the remaining tricks and exposes his cards and it then develops that the other side could have made another trick, then all the remaining tricks go to the other side.

15. In all cases of errors, the points lost by the participants who erred, shall be of the same number as that which the Player wins.





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